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13 APR 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Support

SUBJECT : Language Proficiency Testing

1. On 8 February 1966 the Language Training School (LTS) began an intensive foreign language testing drive in response to the new Agency language policy. The policy places on LTS the responsibility of testing by 31 December 1966 all staff personnel at Headquarters with claimed but previously untested foreign language proficiencies. This intensive testing drive is being conducted concurrently with our regular testing of EOD's, overseas returnees, students completing courses, etc.

2. Administration of the testing effort was implemented as follows: The Language Qualifications Register was divided up to show the language proficiencies in each division or office of the Agency; pertinent runs were handed to the training officers of the directorates, who, in turn, passed them to their divisions. Training officers' representatives contacted individually each employee who has a claimed but untested proficiency in any language and set up with LTS an appointment according to a schedule issued by the School; the current schedule carries through June 1966. Each week, Tuesday through Friday, two panels consisting of two native speakers, mainly contract instructors at LTS, give tests at Headquarters three hours per day. Up to the present time, oral tests only have been offered, but we are now making up combined reading/speaking tests, which will begin later in April.

3. At the beginning of the intensive testing drive, a total of 4151 untested claims remained to be tested. Since then, with a test reservation capacity of 504 tests available, LTS has given 284 proficiency tests and has received notification of roughly 270 disclaimers, either in lists from various divisions, which are still arriving, or

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verbally from employees when they were called by telephone after not appearing for a scheduled test. In addition to the disclaimers, 105 employees were scheduled for tests and, when they did not appear and were called by telephone, requested to be rescheduled at a later date; this figure represents 25 percent of the scheduled tests during the period covered. These figures point to the weakest link in the testing effort, namely the time and energy wasted by division training officers and LTS personnel in scheduling tests for personnel who cannot or do not choose to appear at the scheduled time. It has also been noted that some employees claiming Intermediate to Native proficiency in a language, have, upon being queried, disclaimed current proficiency; in several instances such disclaimers are open to question.

4. Another problem being encountered is that employees are departing for PCS overseas without having been tested, and will not be available for two to four years. To eliminate this gap, it is suggested that language testing be required as a part of employees' out-processing and that they not be released for departure prior to completion of the tests.

5. Although 3699 theoretical claims still remain to be tested, we estimate the actual number of tests to be conducted at 2400, because of the relatively high disclaimer rate. Even at the current rate of testing, LTS has the capability of conducting over 2500 tests before the 31 December deadline. With the current accelerated recruitment of language instructors, LTS estimates that it could double its testing capacity by the end of June, if needed.

6. Scheduling of tests and efforts to achieve a higher degree of compliance with the policy have been closely coordinated between LTS and the Senior Training Officers as well as staff and division training officers. By and large the cooperation of the training officers has been excellent. Although the training officers have made recent renewed efforts to improve compliance, we are now trying to assure compliance with the policy through command channels. An Agency notice will shortly be published which will place the responsibility upon each employee concerned to appear for the tests as scheduled.

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GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

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Within the next four weeks we should have sufficient evidence as to whether publication of the notice and other recent measures taken suffice to assure compliance with the policy and thus the achievement of our testing objective.


Acting Director of Training

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